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Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 107343 TOSEC 040242
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DRAFTED BY H:DJBENNET:SM
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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM H (BENNET)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: SECURITY ASSISTANCE BILL -- ISRAEL COMPROMISE

1. THE PRESIDENT'S EFFORT WITH CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS THIS MORNING PAID OFF IN FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP THIS AFTERNOON. WE SENT THE FOLLOWING REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT TONIGHT:

THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE REPORTED THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE BILL IN ACCORD WITH THE AGREEMENT YOU REACHED AT THIS MORNING'S MEETING. YOUR INTERVENTION AT THIS MOM-NT WAS CRITICAL NOT ONLY TO OUR SUCCESS WITH THE BILL BUT IN CREATING A VERY IMPORTANT PERCEPTION ON THE HILL AND HOPE-FULLY IN THE PUBLIC THAT THERE REALLY IS NO TENSION OR MIS-TRUST BETWEEN THE CONGRESS AND THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH ON ISRAEL POLICY. THIS EXERCISE, I BELIEVE, PROVIDES THE BASIS FOR AN INCREASINGLY COOPERATIVE EFFORT BETWEEN US AND CON-
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PAGE 02 STATE 107343 TOSEC 040242

GRESS IN FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS GENERALLY.

THE AMOUNTS IN THE BILL, THE HANDLING OF THE TURKISH ARMS QUESTION (INCLUDING SOME COMMENTS DURING TODAY'S MARKUP BY FRANK CHURCH PRAISING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUR ALLY TURKEY TO NATO SECURITY), ALL ADD UP TO WHAT WE EXPECTED AND NEED.

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

PRESS TREATMENT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, AND MAY PORTRAY THE PRESIDENT AS BACKING DOWN IN FACE OF DETERMINED CONGRESS.
2. CHURCH, ACTING AS CHAIRMAN, HUMPHREY AND JAVITS WERE THE PRINCIPAL ACTORS IN THIS AFTERNOON'S SESSION. HUMPHREY, IN REPORTING TO THE COMMITTEE ON THE MEETING THIS MORNING, PLACED THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER IN THE RECORD. TEXT FOLLOWS:

"MAY 12, 1977

"TO HUBERT HUMPHREY

"I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES FOR MEETING WITH ME TODAY. YOUR VIEWS AND WISE COUNSEL ARE INVALUABLE. LET ME REVIEW OUR DISCUSSION AND REITERATE OUR BASIC AGREEMENT.

"I UNDERSTAND THAT YOUR SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE IS CONSIDERING PUTTING INTO LAW SEVERAL ASPECTS OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSED ARMS TRANSFER POLICY WHICH HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF CONSULTATION WITH THE CONGRESS. IN THAT CONSULTATION, CONCERN HAS BEEN EXPRESSED THAT ISRAEL WAS NOT PLACED IN 'THE EXCEPTED' CATEGORY OF NATIONS SUCH AS NATO MEMBERS.

"LET ME SPEAK FRANKLY IN SAYING THAT ISRAEL WAS NOT PLACED IN THAT CATEGORY SIMPLY BECAUSE WE BELIEVE IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL DO EVERYTHING NECESSARY TO INSURE ISRAEL'S SECURITY. IN MY VIEW, THIS IS ESSENTIAL NOT ONLY TO DETER WAR BUT TO MAKE PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE, AS WELL AS TO INSURE WHATEVER SETTLEMENT WE CAN ACHIEVE.
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"I RECOGNIZE THE SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES THE UNITED STATES HAS TOWARD ISRAEL IN THIS REGARD AND THE PARTICULAR CONSIDERATION THAT THEREFORE MUST BE GIVEN TO OUR MILITARY ARMS AND COPRODUCTION ARRANGEMENTS WITH ISRAEL. OUR APPRECIATION OF THAT RESPONSIBILITY AND OUR ACTIONS THAT ARE BASED UPON IT WILL NOT BE DIMINISHED BY THE ARMS TRANSFER POLICY WHICH I PLAN TO ADOPT.

"ACCORDINGLY, I HAVE INSERTED EXPLICIT LANGUAGE WHICH ACKNOWLEDGES OUR SPECIAL SECURITY RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL. THE RESTRAINTS I AM IMPOSING WILL APPLY EXCEPT WHERE I DETERMINE THAT COUNTRIES FRIENDLY TO THE UNITED STATES MUST DEPEND ON ADVANCED WEAPONRY TO OFFSET QUANTITATIVE AND OTHER DISADVANTAGES IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A REGIONAL BALANCE.

"BY DISCUSSING MY ARMS TRANSFER POLICY WITH CONGRESS, I BELIEVE I MADE CLEAR THAT I INTEND TO CONSULT WITH THE CONGRESS QUITE CLOSELY ON THIS ISSUE. LEGISLATION INCLUDING

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

SPECIFIC EXCEPTIONS FOR ISRAEL WOULD HAVE VERY UNFORTUNATE CONSEQUENCES. IT WOULD JEOPARDIZE THE DELICATE ROLE WE HAVE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AS A FIRM FRIEND OF ISRAEL AND YET THE HONEST BROKER BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE ARABS WITH WHOM WE ALSO HOPE TO HAVE BETTER RELATIONS IN THE FUTURE. I BELIEVE THIS ROLE IS ESSENTIAL TO ACHIEVING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

"SECONDLY, I BELIEVE SUCH LEGISLATION WILL LEAD TO OTHER COUNTRIES INSISTING ON AN EXCEPTION STATUS FOR THEMSELVES. IT THEREFORE RUNS A SERIOUS RISK OF TAKING THE GUTS OUT OF AN ARMS RESTRAINT POLICY THAT I BELIEVE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE STRONGLY SUPPORT AND WHICH THE CONGRESS HAD LONG URGED.

"LET ME CONCLUDE BY SAYING THAT I BELIEVE THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MY VIEW AND THAT OF THE CONGRESS ON THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 STATE 107343 TOSEC 040242

SUBSTANCE OF THE ISSUE. WE BOTH WANT TO RESTRAIN ARMS. WE BOTH RECOGNIZE OUR UNIQUE RESPONSIBILITIES WITH REGARD TO ISRAEL'S SECURITY. I AM DETERMINED THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE HISTORIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL AND PREVIOUS AND CONTINUING UNDERSTANDINGS, MY POLICY OF RESTRAINT IN U.S. ARMS TRANSFERS, INCLUDING ARMS SALES CEILINGS, SHALL NOT IMPAIR ISRAEL'S DETERRENT STRENGTH NOR UNDERMINE THE MILITARY BALANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. IT IS MY VIEW THAT WHATEVER DIFFERENCES WE MAY HAVE RELATE TO THE FORM IN WHICH THIS SHARED POSITION IS EXPRESSED. I WOULD URGE THAT YOU NOT CODIFY THIS IN LEGISLATION BECAUSE OF THE RISKS THAT I HAVE DESCRIBED.

"SINCERELY, (S/S JIMMY CARTER)"

3. JAVITS, FOR HIS PART, WITHDREW HIS AMENDMENTS AND OFFERED SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE WHICH HAD BEEN AGREED UPON PURSUANT TO THE WHITE HOUSE MEETING UNDERSTANDING. IT WAS ADOPTED WITHOUT OPPOSITION. TEXT FOLLOWS:

"IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE HISTORIC SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BE-TWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL AND PREVIOUS AGREEMENTS AND CONTINUING UNDERSTANDINGS, THE CONGRESS JOINS WITH THE PRESIDENT IN REAFFIRMING THAT A POLICY OF RESTRAINT IN U.S. ARMS TRANFERS, INCLUDING ARMS SALES CEILINGS, SHALL NOT IMPAIR ISRAEL'S DETERRENT STRENGTH OR UNDERMINE THE MILITARY BALANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST."

4. IN ADDITION, A TROUBLESOME GLENN AMENDMENT WAS COM-PROMISED IN GOOD SPIRIT WITH THE ADOPTED VERSION MEETING OUR REQUIREMENTS. GLENN PRAISED THE COOPERATION BETWEEN

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

THE TWO BRANCHES IN RESOLVING THE PROBLEM.

5. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE LEVELS WERE CLOSE TO OUR REQUEST AND CLEARLY ACCEPTABLE. OUR EFFORTS, SPEARHEADED BY PHIL HABIB AND DICK HOLBROOKE WITH CHURCH AND GLENN, RESULTED IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 05 STATE 107343 TOSEC 040242

RESTORATION OF THE MAP PROGRAMS FOR THAILAND AND INDONESIA AS WE HAD REQUESTED.

6. SARBANES AT THE CLOSE OF THE SESSION SOUGHT THE RE-STORATION OF REDUNDANT LANGUAGE ON LIMITATIONS OF AID TO TURKEY FROM LAST YEAR'S BILL, AND HE SUCCEEDED. THIS EFFORT WAS EXPECTED AND MORE THAN COMPENSATED FOR BY CHURCH WHO PROVIDED SEVERAL PARAGRAPHS OF PRAISE FOR OUR TURKISH ALLIES, THEIR CRITICAL ROLE IN NATO, AND THEIR EARLIER CONTRIBUTIONS IN KOREA. USIA WILL SEE THAT CHURCH'S LANGUAGE IS AVAILABLE IN ANKARA.

7. CHURCH AND HUMPHREY IN CLOSING ONCE AGAIN PRAISED THE NEW SPIRIT OF COOPERATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION.

CHRISTOPHER

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